editor's choice

Vagabond

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 7

English Edition

SHK

...TOMORROW.

INSHUN
IS
COMING...

SHK

KRAK

Vagabond

#60

vol. 7

Duel's Eve

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

THUD

FSH

FSH

FSH

KKRL

FSH

SHAOOOO

FWOOSH

FISH

TOK

TOK

TOK

THWAK

BRR

BRR

BRR

FWOOOOSH

YAH!

YAH!

HAH!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

SHA

OOO

DAMN

FWHS!

FSSSSHH

DAMN IT!!

FSSHH

YAHHH!

SHUNK

FSSSSU

SHAAAAAAA-

FZZ

FZZ

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

SSH

YOU. AGAIN...?

I DON'T HAVE ANY FOOD FOR YOU TODAY...

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

I DID ALL
I COULD

NOW IT'S
FALL...

SUMMER
HAS
PASSED

WAS IT MERELY
FOR YOUR OWN
SATISFACTION?

ENDING A...
TIME ALONE IN
THE MOUNTAIN

BUT WHAT HAS
YOU ACTUALLY
ACCOMPLISHED

INEI IS GREAT, BUT HE'S GETTING OLD AND FRAIL.

HE CAN'T COMPARE TO INSHUN'S YOUTH AND VIGOR.

I'VE BEEN TRAINING WITH THE GREAT HOZOIN INEI...

I'VE MADE PROGRESS.

IF IT WERE JUST A MATTER OF TRAINING FOR A MONTH OR TWO...

...THEN ANYONE COULD BECOME A MASTER.

GRP

TSSSH

BRR
HUF.
BRR
BRR
HUF.
HUF.
BRR

SHAA

AAA

PLISH

PLISH

PLISH

SHAA

SHAA

KRAKL

ROWR

I'LL MAKE THE FIRST MOVE.

THAT'S RIGHT. CATCHING THE OPPONENT OFF GUARD ■ JUST ANOTHER STRATEGY.

HUF.

NO NEED TO STAY OUT IN THE WOODS UNTIL MORNING.

HUF.

PLISH

PLISH

HA HA! BEWARE, INSHUN.

THE FIGHT'S ALREADY BEGUN!

SHAAAA

KRAKK

I FEEL LIKE A KID.

I'M SO EXCITED I CAN'T SLEEP.

FSHHH

Vagabond

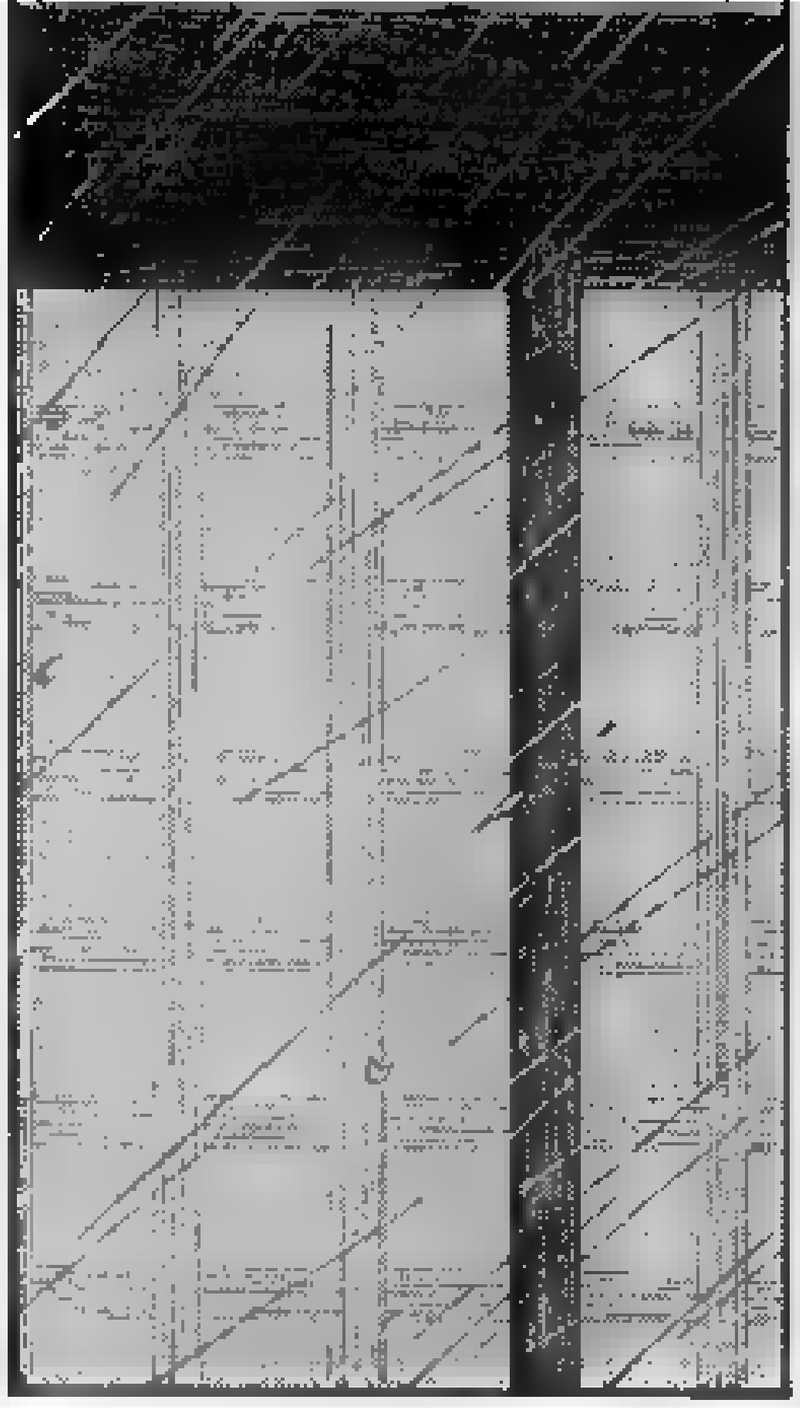
いぬ。
(DOG.)
あこそ ねこに ているけど ぜんぜん ちがう
(LOOKS SIMILAR TO A CAT, BUT ACTUALLY IT IS VERY DIFFERENT.)

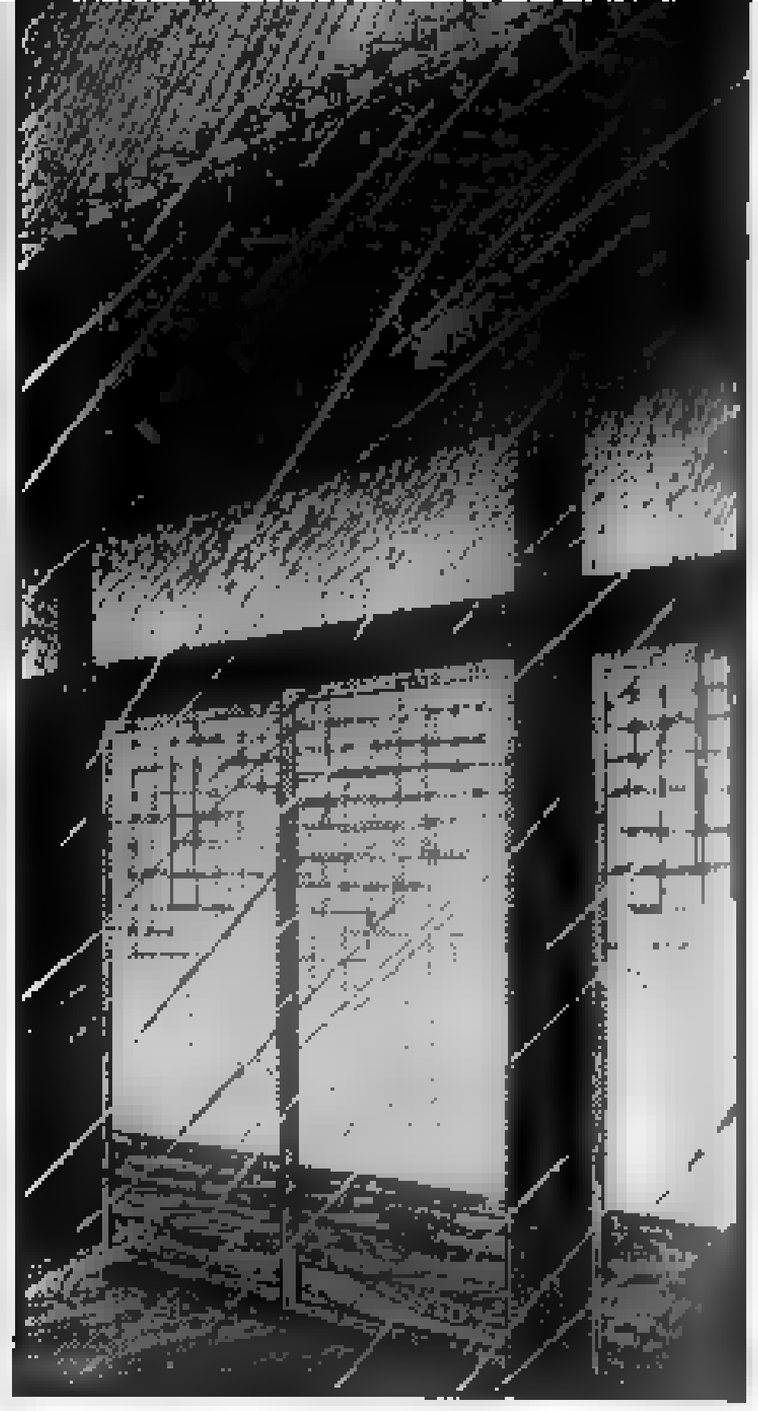
#GI Duell's Exo III

SAKK

SAAAA

ROAR
INSULIN!!
I AM HERE!





FINCH

HERE I GO.

HMM

SWIP

EAK

HUF.

HUF.

WHUD

PLUNSH

ROAR

RRRRRRR

YOU'RE PATHETIC, TAKEZO.

CAN'T YOU MAKE ANY PROGRESS?

HE

I CAN'T BE

HE

HIM

FATHER...

HE

YOU REALIZE YOU HAVE NO CHANCE OF WINNING SO YOU RESORT TO THIS SURPRISE ATTACK...

...BUT YOU CAN'T EVEN GO THROUGH WITH IT.

YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED ONE BIT!

HUH

THMP THMP

HUH

THIS IS A DREAM!

THMP THMP

HUH

IT WAS ONLY A DREAM

HUH

THMP THMP

...AND CHOOSE TREACHERY.

YOU GIVE IN TO YOUR FEAR...

HUH

HUH

YOU ESCAPED FROM INSHUN IN TERROR...

...AND NOW YOU'RE ATTEMPTING A SNEAK ATTACK!

HUH

HUH

YOU TRIED THE SAME THING ON ME ONE NIGHT, DIDN'T YOU?

YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL SINCE THEN

ABSURD!

WHOOOSH

I AM MAKING PROGRESS...

SHAZAM

I'M GOING TO BE INVINCIBLE

YOU WEAKLING.

WHY PRETEND TO BE STRONG?

IT WAS TO BE

THIS IS A DREAM

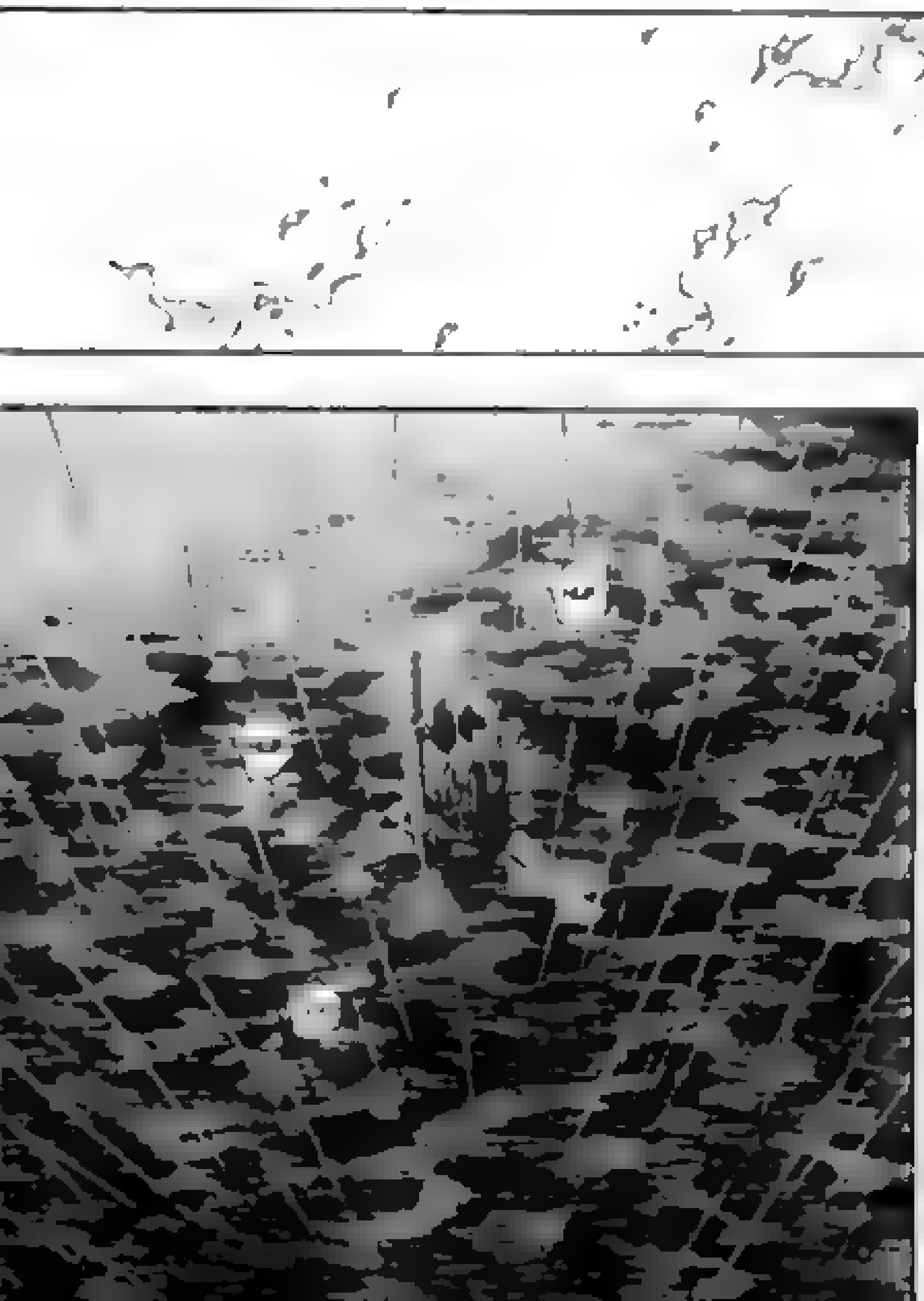
LAW LIVES

I AM THE MIGHTIEST!

HAHAHAH

FWOOOSH

YAHH!



YOU
SHALL
DIE
SOON

!!

PUSH

PUSH

PLUSH

PLUSH

WHAT A HORRIBLE STORM...

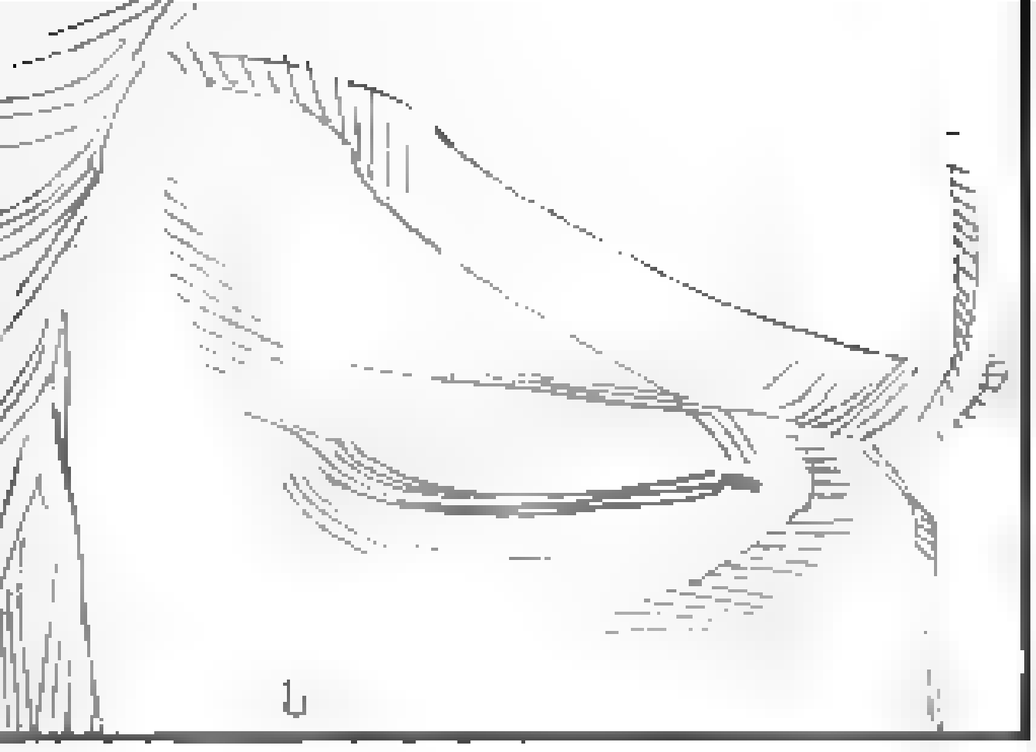
I WONDER HOW MATAHACHI IS DOING?

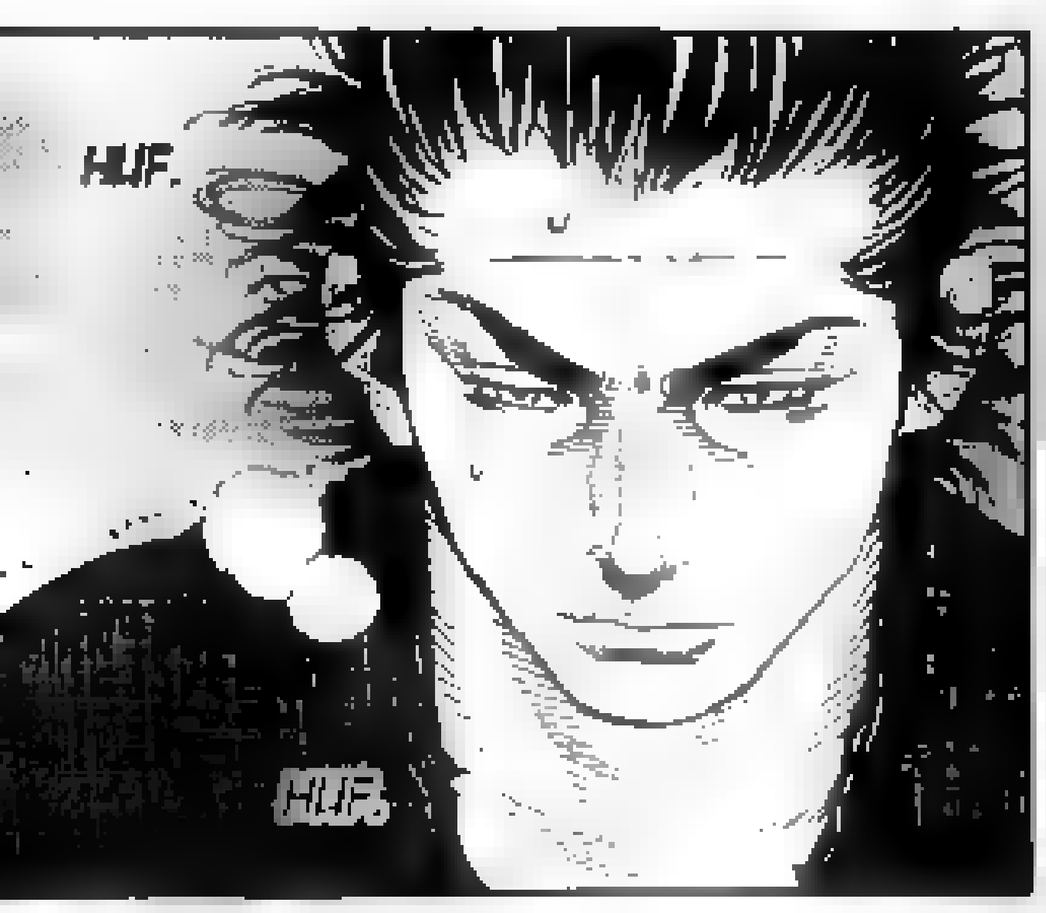
HAVE YOU MADE A NAME FOR YOURSELF...?

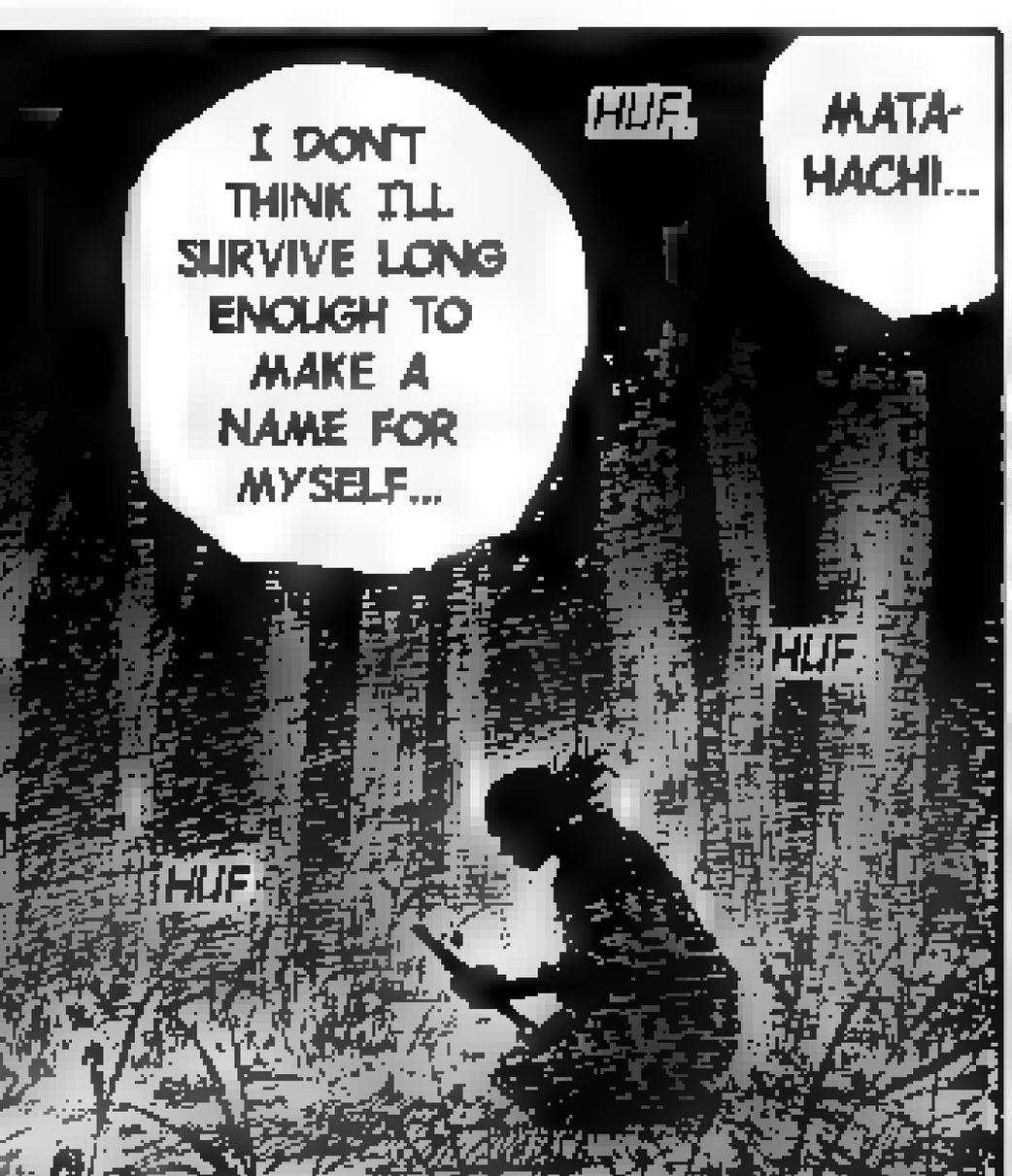
IT REMINDS ME OF THE BATTLE OF SEKIGAHARA...

SO MUCH MUD...

TUGG




HUF.
HUF.


I DON'T THINK I'LL SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF...
HUF.
MATA-HACHI...
HUF
HUF

OTSU...

IT'S ALMOST DAWN...

OTSU...

OTSU...

I DON'T WANT TO DIE.

HE HAD QUITE A TALENT FOR IT.

ON SOLITARY NIGHTS IN THE WOODS...

MUSASHI OCCASIONALLY PASSED TIME CARVING BUDDHA STATUES.

BUT FOR MUSASHI...

...TONIGHT'S POOR EXAMPLE OF HIS CRAFT WAS A FOREBODING SIGN OF THE NEXT DAY'S DUEL.

IT'S DAWN.

HMPH.

HAH...

A DEMON'S CHILD... THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE USED TO CALL ME...

EVIL...

HMPH...

UNBELIEV-ABLE.

HOW CAN I BE PRAYING...?

INSHLIN IS COMING.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

#62 | Dawn

YOU FIEND!

YOU BEAST!

YOU'RE EVIL!

DEMON'S CHILD!

I'M NOT ONE OF YOU!

I'M THE SON OF A SWORDSMAN

THE SON OF A SWORDSMAN!...

I AM WHO I AM.

EVERYONE SHUNNED ME.

BUT I WAS THE ONE WHO TURNED MY BACK ON *THEM.*

I'M LEAVING THIS PATHETIC TOWN.

BUT ACTUALLY...

I MUST FOLLOW MY OWN PATH.

TUP

!!

?

WHUD

THOK

THOK

THOK

TUP

MAY SHE HAVE A HAPPY LIVE.

OTSU...

...YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE...

...I ENJOYED SPENDING TIME WITH *YOU.*

...ACTUALLY...

HM!?

...

...DID I FALL ASLEEP?

...

THE DAY'S DONE!?

...

HUH...

HOW ABSURD!

WHAT AM I ANYWAY!?

HA!

I SURVIVED ONE MORE DAY.

HA!

HA HA HA HA!

HA HA HA!

HA HA HA HA!

I'M NOTHING.

IF I'M DESTINED TO DIE...

THEN THAT'S ALL RIGHT TOO.

I'M BLESSED.

INSHUN OF HŌZŌIN [redacted] THE STRONGEST OPPONENT I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED.

NOT BAD FOR WHAT COULD BE MY FINAL FIGHT.

YES.

HM!?

MUSASHI!!

YOU'RE STILL HERE!!

!!

FORGIVE ME.

I OVERSLEPT.

I'M SORRY, INSHUN.

HM...

SEE, MASTER, HE DIDN'T RUN AWAY!!

SEE, AGON!!

HA HA HA HA!

KRIK

KRIK

WHAT NERVE... HE WAS ASLEEP!?

IS HE FEARLESS OR JUST AN IDIOT?

HM

TUGG

TUGG

FLIP

THE HŌZŌIN CROSS-SHAPED SPEAR, INHERITED FROM MASTER INʼEI.

THIS SHALL BE MY WEAPON...

...AGREED?

HRMPH.

FINE.

WELL, THEN...

IT LOOKS AS IF YOU'RE READY.

KRICH

COME!!

KRICH

Vagabond

(DA DA DA DA: RUNNING SOUND EFFECTS.)

KRAKK!

#63 | Spider's Thread

AS A DEVOUT MONK, I MUST ASK YOU...

HRMPH...

WELL THEN, MUSASHI.

...

!!

SHOULD YOU DIE...

...WHERE SHALL I TAKE YOUR BONES?

...THEN I MUST ACCEPT IT.

IF THAT'S MY FATE...

THMP... THMP...

I WILL ACCEPT IT.

THMP THMP

FCH

FCH

FCH

MY BONES...

DEATH...

!?

BURY THEM RIGHT HERE.

MY BONES...

HMM...

I, INEI, SHALL BE THE WITNESS OF THIS BATTLE.

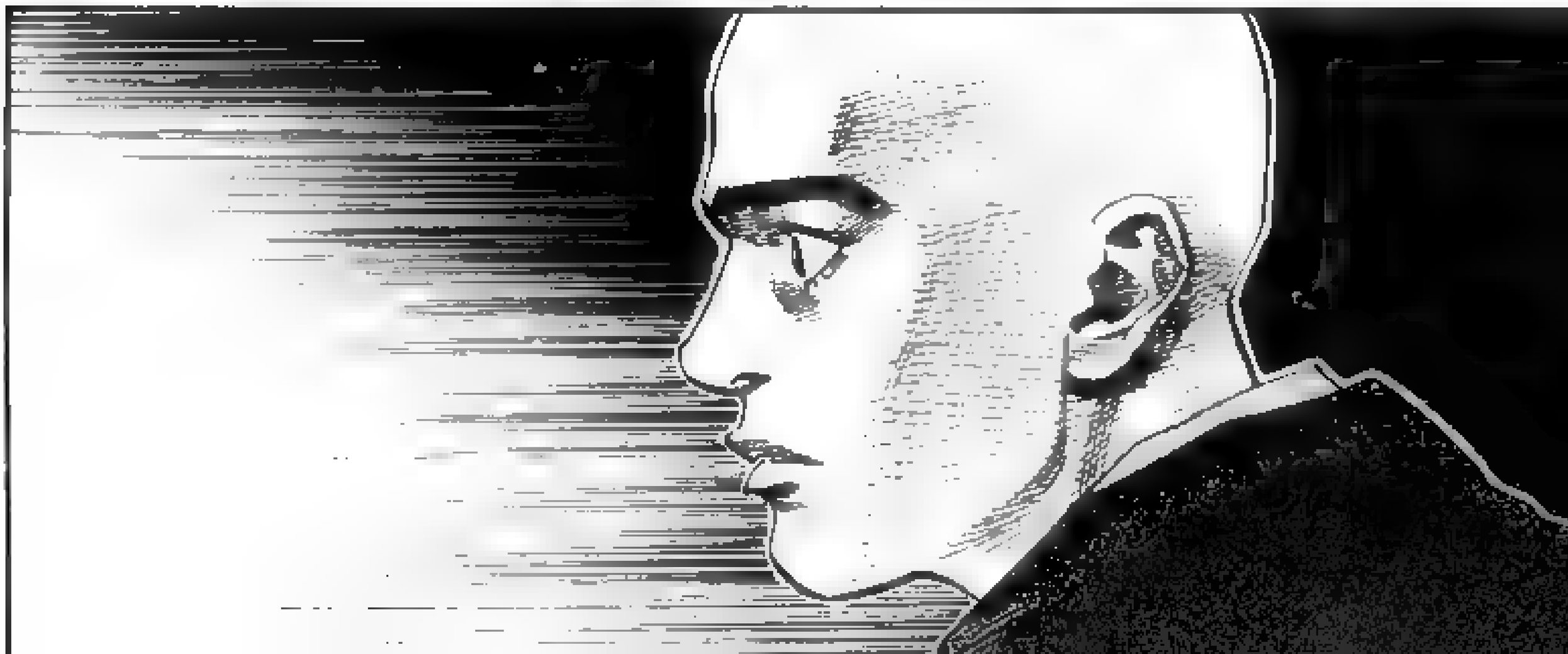
ALL RIGHT, THEN...

YOU MAY BEGIN...

ESCUCHA

HE'S JUST A MAN...

INSHUN IS JUST A MAN...



THE BRUTISH RAGE HE USED TO PROJECT...

HE'S MANAGING TO KEEP IT CONTAINED...

THIS IS A SURPRISE.

HMM...

THAT GRACELESS BLOOD-THIRST IS GONE.

KRAK

IT MAY JUST BE THE FLICKERING OF THE FIRE...

...OR IT MIGHT BE THE DARKNESS BEHIND HIM...

...OR THE WAY HIS SHADOW IS MOVING...

ATTACK!

I JUST DON'T RECALL MUSASHI BEING SO BIG!

HE'S HUGE.

SOMEHOW...

MUSASHI'S DIFFERENT THAN BEFORE.

FICK

DON'T EVEN BLINK...

AGON...

YES...?

WHOEVER WINS, IT'LL BE OVER IN AN INSTANT...

!!

Vagabond

まばたきだめなのよ…
(I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO BLINK!?)

FWIP

...

HOW MUCH TIME HAS PASSED?...

YES. MASTER

UN-NECESSARY CRUELTY.

COULD IT BE, THEY *CAN'T* MOVE?

WHY HAVEN'T THEY MOVED?

#64 Heaven and Earth

AGON.

FACING INSHUN THE LAST TIME HAS FOREVER SCORCHED FEAR INTO HIS MEMORY.

THAT IS OBVIOUS.

I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY *MUSASHI'S* FROZEN UP...

BUT WHY WON'T INSHUN MAKE A MOVE..?

HRMPH...

MUST A FIGHT ALWAYS BE SO CONSPICUOUS?

MASTER ?

THIS FIGHT...

THEIR SOULS ARE INTER-LOCKED...

IT'S A CONTEST OF WILLS...

...TRYING TO GAIN THE UPPER HAND.

HFF...

HFF...

HFF...

HFF...

KRICH

KRICH

FP
FP
FP
HMM...
FP
FP
I'M SO EXCITED, I HAVE GOOSE-BUMPS!
MUSASHI!
MUSASHI IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.
INTERESTING...
HFF...
HFF...
LOOKS LIKE I'VE ROUSED A SLEEPING TIGER!

FWOOSH

THE HOZOIN CROSS-SHAPED SPEAR.

NOT USED TO THAT WEAPON...

TP

MUSTN'T GET DISTRACTED.

THAT IS WHAT IT MEANS TO TRULY "SEE."

SEE EVERY-THING IN ITS ENTIRETY EFFORTLESSLY.

ONCE YOUR HEART IS PREOCCUPIED...

...YOUR SWORD WILL NOT BE TRUE

HFF.

HFF.

HFF.

BENEATH THE VASTNESS OF THESE STARRY HEAVENS...

...INSHLIN AND I, BOTH, ARE INSIGNIFICANT.

KRICH

WHY DO YOU RETREAT?
INSHUN...

...

KRKKL

"AS THE FOUR SEASONS BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH FLOW IN AN ENDLESS CYCLE...

SIR?

HEAVEN AND EARTH...

"SO TOO, MUST MAN WORK HIS WAY...

"...THROUGH HIS OWN CYCLE OF SEASONS CONTINUOUS."

SIR...?

HAH!

...SEASONS...

...CONTINUOUS...
HRMPH.

HEH
HEH!

THE TEACHINGS OF MY OWN MASTER.

HE'S STILL SO YOUNG.

INSHUN
...

MASTER INEI...

YOUR MASTER !?

HRMPH
...

WHY HAVEN'T I NOTICED THAT BEFORE NOW?

...A FRESH NEW SPRING IS SURE TO FOLLOW...

...INVIGORATED WITH STRENGTH RENEWED...

IF YOU ARE ABLE TO ENDURE A LONG HARD WINTER...

IT SEEMS YOU HAVE SURVIVED THE LATEST WINTER OF YOUR TRAINING...

WELL, MUSASHI...

Vagabond

(STOP WITH THE FLASHBACKS.)

A SMILE...?

HOW COULD MUSASHI BE SO CONFIDENT?

I DONT UNDER-STAND.

HMPH...

MUSTN'T LET MYSELF GET INTIMIDATED...

WAIT A MINUTE...

WAIT...

...!!

I'VE BEEN SEEKING OUT THE MOST FORMIDABLE OPPONENT I COULD FIND...

...AND I FEEL THAT I'M VERY CLOSE TO ACHIEVING PERFECTION...

I HAVE NO FEARS...

A FIGHT SO INTENSE, IT BRINGS ME TO THE BRINK OF DEATH.

THE ONE THING I LACK...

...IS THE EXPERIENCE OF MORTAL COMBAT.

AN ENEMY SO STRONG I MUST RISK EVERYTHING I HAVE.

THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN SEEKING OUT.

...THEN I OWE YOU MY GRATITUDE!!

IF YOU INDEED HAVE DEVELOPED INTO A FORMIDABLE OPPONENT...

THIS IS NOT THE MUSASHI I FACED BEFORE.

SUCH INTENSITY...

...I WILL BE UNDEFEATABLE.

AFTER A THIS FIGHT...

YAHHH!!

#65 Legacy

SCHUFF

!!

KRICH

I CAN SEE...

BUT...

WHY DO I FEEL...?

EVERYTHING, DOWN TO THE MOVEMENT OF HIS LONG EYELASHES...

I CAN SEE EVERYTHING, CLEARLY.

TOO CALM

I FEEL...

I'M IN MORTAL DANGER. SHOULD I BE FEELING LIKE THIS?

I'M FACING THE MOST POWERFUL OPPONENT I'VE EVER KNOWN.

...SO CALM.

I FEEL...

AND MY VISION IS SO CLEAR, I CAN EVEN SEE THE VEINS OF LEAVES IN THE BACKGROUND...

GULP

MASTER INEI... MAY I INQUIRE...?

WHY DID YOU TAKE MUSASHI ON AS A DISCIPLE?

KRKKK

FWP

...

HE'S TOTALLY VULNERABLE...

...AND YET HE LEAVES NOTHING OPEN...

MASTER, THIS MAY NOT BE AN APPROPRIATE TIME...

BUT SOME OF THE DISCIPLES ARE NOT CONFIDENT IN INSHUN'S ABILITIES AS THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HŌZŌIN...

...

A DISCIPLE, HE IS NOT...

BUT...

...YOU TRAINED HIM!!

YOU TRAINED A MAN TO DEFEAT INSHUN!

WHY, SIR!?

HE KNOWS ONLY TOO WELL HOW INFERIOR HE IS TO INSHUN.

MYŌEI...

MASTER INEI, YOUR HEART IS OPEN TO US. YOU ARE GENEROUS AND KIND. BUT INSHUN, HE IS--

DON'T COMPARE US.

BUT SIR...

WHAT IS IT?

HRMPH!

BUT...

...

AGON, DO YOU FEEL THE SAME WAY?

I DO NOT.

THAT HE'S TOO ALOOF AND DETATCHED...

AS A PERSON...

PEOPLE FEEL THAT INSHUN IS...

MANY DISCIPLES ARE DISCONTENT.

AND WITH THE RUMORS THAT YOU HAVE BEEN TRAINING MUSASHI FOR THIS DUEL...

BUT INSHUN'S REMOTENESS...

IT FOSTERS FEAR AND JEALOUSY IN THE OTHERS...

AGON...

YOU ARE A GOOD MAN...I WILL CONFIDE IN YOU...

YOUR BLABBERING...

IT'S DISTRACTING ME FROM THE DUEL.

IT'S STIRRED UP MYÖEI AND THE OTHERS EVEN MORE...

THE DISCIPLES ARE VERY CONFUSED...!

I'VE NOT MUCH TIME LEFT IN THIS WORLD.

AGON...

...!!

BUT TO WHAT END? FOR WHAT REASON WAS I BORN?

LET ME ASK YOU...

I, HŌZŌIN KAKUZENBŌ IN'EI, WAS BORN INTO THIS WORLD...

KRICH

KRICH

AND YOU'VE PASSED YOUR LEGACY DOWN TO FUTURE GENERATIONS.

THE TECHNIQUE, YES...

MASTER...

YOU DEVELOPED THE HŌZOIN SPEAR TECHNIQUE!

"MECHANICAL ASPECTS"...?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THERE ARE A FEW TO WHICH I'VE PASSED DOWN THE MECHANICAL ASPECTS OF MY TECHNIQUE... YES...

MASTER ...?

I HAVEN'T PASSED ON THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO INSHUN...

HMM...

AS MY BODY WEAKENS, I'VE COME TO REALIZE...

THE LEGACY THAT A MASTER MUST PASS ON TO HIS SUCCESSOR...

IT STILL REMAINS INSIDE HERE.

THUMP

I WILL NOT DIE UNTIL I'VE PASSED IT ON TO HIM.

I CAN NOT!

MASTER INEI.

MASTER INEI!

KRICH

YAGYŪ MUNEYOSHI HAS ARRIVED, SIR!!

HM...

...

KAMITZUMI ISE NO KAMI WILL ALSO BE ARRIVING MOMENTARILY, SIR.

KOFF

KOFF

THE MASTER SWORDSMAN!

KAMITZUMI ISE NO KAMI...

KOFF.

...

KLNCH

76 YEARS...

I'VE LIVED A LONG LIFE...

#66 The Master

COME SIT WITH ME..

AND YOU STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO!! YOU HAVE AT LEAST ANOTHER 30 YEARS TO GO!

OTSU...

FLIP

YOU'LL CATCH A COLD OUT HERE, SIR.

CAN'T YOU SLEEP?

IT'S NOT THAT...

SIT DOWN, OTSU.

YOU MUST BE CAREFUL. A COLD CAN LEAD TO--

I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE. BUT I THINK IT'S TIME YOU SHOW YOURSELF.

YOU MUST BE TIRED OF WAITING THERE IN THE DARK. AND YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO ATTACK ME BY SURPRISE

GASP!

...

F-WOM

...SENIOR DISCIPLE OF YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ OF THE EIGHT KYOTO STYLES.

I AM GION TOJI...

I'M FULLY AWARE OF MY IMPER-TINENCE...

HOWEVER ...

I'VE LOST MY WAY...

THE YOSHIOKA ...

I WITNESSED SOMEONE WITH SKILLS BEYOND MY COMPREHENSION ...

I AM ASHAMED TO SAY THAT I DID NOT EVEN FACE HIM IN COMBAT...

ANY DIGNITY THAT I MAY HAVE HAD HAS BEEN SHATTERED.

OR PERHAPS I'VE LOST MY MIND.

HUFF

HUFF

I WOULD LIKE TO MEET MY END...

...ON MY OWN TERMS...

I'VE NEVER BEEN AFRAID OF DEATH.

HUFF

HUFF

ZZING.

I WOULD LIKE TO DIE..

..FIGHTING THE MIGHTIEST OF WARRIORS-- THE INDOMITABLE YAGYŪ SEKISHŪSAI MUNEYOSHI...

THUD

MASTER ?

WHAT'S GOING ON?

HOW DID YOU--!?

HEY!

WHATRE YOU DOING!?

WE FINALLY MANAGED TO SEND YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRO AWAY...

...AND NOW SEIJÜRO'S DISCIPLE SHOWS UP...

BASTARD! HOW DID YOU GET IN?

YOU'RE LUCKY YOU'RE NOT DEAD!

THUD

YOU BASTARD!!

IF YOU ARE LOST. YOU SHOULD SEEK THE AID OF YOUR OWN MASTER. NOT ME...

GION TOJI...

THE MORE DEDICATED ONE IS TO THE SWORD, THE MORE LIKELY YOU ARE TO LOSE YOUR WAY...

BUT NO MAN...

...IS AN ISLAND, UNTO HIMSELF.

SIR...

I WITNESSED IT...

FOR THE FIRST TIME...

...

WIT-NESSED WHAT?

YOUR SWORDSMAN-SHIP.

...

PHEW! WHAT A NIGHT...

...

I SUPPOSE IT'S TIME TO GO TO BED.

IS THAT WHAT IT'S LIKE TO KNOW THE WAY OF THE SWORD?

HM?

IS THAT...

THE FIGHTING I KNOW IS FULL OF RAGE...

...AND FURY...

YOU SEEMED AT PEACE AND SO CALM.

AND IT MAKES ME WANT TO HUG HIM.

SEEING THE DIFFERENCE ...

...ALMOST MAKES ME WANT TO CRY...

IS HE STILL ALIVE?

YOUR FIGHTING STYLES ARE COMPLETELY OPPOSITE...

YES... HE IS.

WHAT WAS HIS NAME AGAIN?

YOUR CHILDHOOD FRIEND...

AH, YES...

...!

MIYAMOTO...

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!!

...THAT'S HIS NAME?

...!!

HMM...

NEVER HEARD OF HIM.

UM...

WHAT'S HE LIKE?

TELL ME ABOUT HIM.

HM?

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

INSHUN JUST MIGHT BE ON THE LOSING END...

A CONFRONTATION OF WILLS SO INTENSE...

...NEITHER CAN AFFORD TO MAKE A MOVE.

HAVE YOU SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE, AGON?

SIR?

...IT'S ABSOLUTELY DRAINING ON BOTH FIGHTERS.

EVEN INSHUN?

TAKE A CLOSE LOOK.

HE WAS FEARED BY EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE BECAUSE HE WAS SO VIOLENT.

WELL, HE USED TO BE CALLED SHINMEN TAKEZO...

WHO IS MIYAMOTO MUSASHI?

HE FOLLOWS THE WAY OF THE SWORD?

...

...!!

YOU CERTAINLY DO SEEM TO ENJOY TALKING ABOUT HIM.

DO YOU LOVE HIM?

WELL, DO YOU?

A MAN LIVING IN A WORLD OF RAGE AND FURY...

HAH!

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

HMM...

...!!

HMM...

I USED TO BE THE SAME WAY...

...UNTIL I HAD THE CHANCE TO MEET MY MASTER.

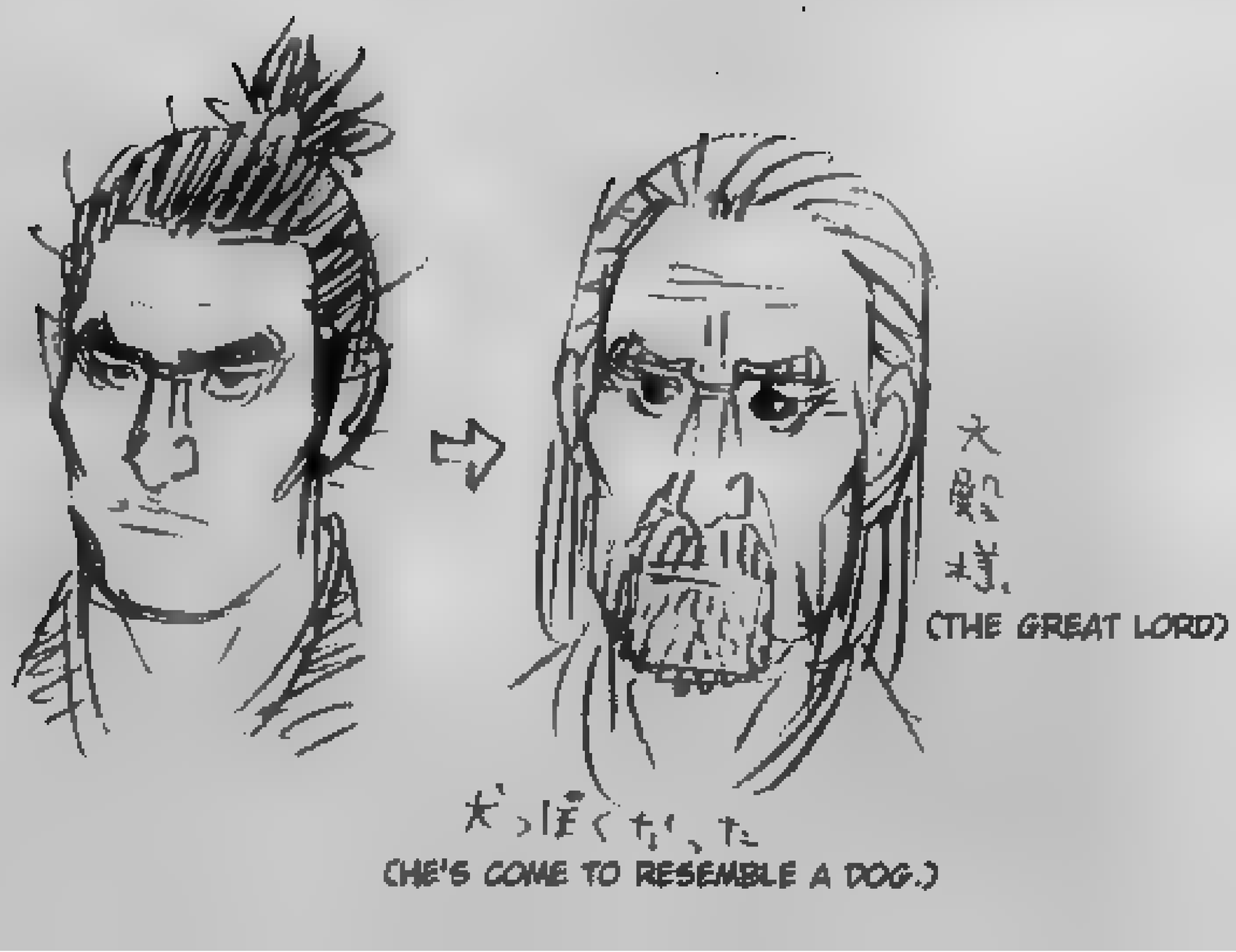
BUT YOU'RE ALREADY 50 YEARS OLD.

I HAVE RESPECT FOR YOU!

THE MIGHTY KAMI'IZUMI ISE NO KAMI HIDETSUNA...

THIS FIGHT IS MINE!

Vagabond


大魔王さま。
(THE GREAT LORD)
犬っぽくなってきた
(HE'S COME TO RESEMBLE A DOG.)

YOU MUSTN'T BE SO RASH.

YOU'LL UNDERMINE YOUR TRUE STRENGTH IF YOU GET TOO WORKED UP!

YAGYŪ...

YAGYŪ TAJIMA NO KAMI MUNEYOSHI ...

QUITE AN INTENSE YOUNG MAN!!

#67

Kami izumi Ise no Kami Hidetsuna

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

ISENOKAMI HAS NO BLOODTHIRST WHATSOEVER.

HUF

HUF

WHAT'S THIS!?

INTIMI-DATING ME WITH HIS KI!?

KRICH

IT'S MY OWN BLOODTHIRST.

NO. THIS IS A REFLECTION OF MYSELF.

HOW!? HOW CAN THAT BE!?

THE GREAT KAMI'IZUMI ISE NO KAMI HIDETSUNA!!

BUT I NEVER WOULD HAVE IMAGINED...

THE MIGHTY TAKEDA SHINGEN WAS IMPRESSED ENOUGH TO OFFER HIM A POSITION AS A DAIMYO...

BUT ISE NO KAMI DECLINED BECAUSE OF HIS SOLE DEDICATION TO THE WAY OF THE SWORD.

NO ONE CAN DENY THAT HE'S THE GREATEST KENGŌ OF OUR TIME-A MASTER SWORDSMAN SUPERIOR TO ALL OTHERS.

HE'S SO CALM...IS THIS WHAT A KENGŌ IS LIKE?

I FEEL COMPLETELY OVERWHELMED...

ぬっ

TEWAK

!!!!

!?

WHA--?

WHAT HAP-PENED !?

TUMP

TOK TOK

KRICH

I, TOO, REQUEST A MATCH WITH YOU, SIR!!

I AM KAKUZENBŌ INEI, THE MASTER OF HŌZŌIN!!

...

LEATHER WRAPPED AROUND BAMBOO?

WHAT AN ODD PRACTICE SWORD.

GRP

HOW CAN HE FIGHT WITH THAT...!?

!!....

FWIP

!?

BASTARD!

YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE ME ON *UNARMED* !?

KRICH

YAHH!!

I...

I
CONCEDE...!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

GRP

...

MASTER IN'EI...

...

I DON'T UNDER-STAND...

HOW DID HE TAKE MY SPEAR!?

SIR...

WE DO NOT HAVE MUCH TO OFFER. BUT PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SPEND THE EVENING HERE AT YOUR LEISURE.

WE'VE PREPARED A MEAL FOR YOU...

SENSEI, SHALL WE TAKE THEM UP ON THEIR OFFER?

I REQUEST ANOTHER MATCH!!

KRLCH

PLEASE SIR, ONE MORE MATCH!

I BESEECH YOU!

YAGYU!

YAGYU...

THE MASTER IS OLD AND WE'VE TRAVELED A LONG WAY...

I ACCEPT MY DEFEAT...

BUT I WANT TO FIND OUT *HOW* I LOST!

I NEED TO KNOW!!

I WANT TO FIGHT THE MASTER, NOT SOME KID...

IF YOU MUST INSIST...

...THEN I SHALL ACCEPT YOUR CHALLENGE. I AM HIKITA BUNGORO, THE MASTER'S NEPHEW AND DISCIPLE.

THWAK

THE FOLLOWING DAY...

...AS WELL AS THE DAY AFTER THAT, YAGYŪ TENACIOUSLY CONTINUED TO CHALLENGE ISE-NO-KAMI.

...

WHO IS MY OPPONENT?

THE END RESULT WAS ALWAYS THE SAME

...AS IF I'M BEING CONSUMED.

THE MOMENT I STEP IN, I BECOME SURROUNDED BY A STRANGE WARMTH...

IT'S AS IF MY OPONENT'S NOT THERE.

...AND I LOSE MY FREEDOM.

WHEN I TRY TO FIGHT AGAINST IT, MY BODY TENSES UP...

HIS STUDIED TECHNIQUE IS MAGNIFICENT.

BUT HIS HEART, HIS SOUL...

HE FOCUSES TOO MUCH ON HIS "SELF".

THOSE ARE THE VERY WORDS...

...OF *MY* MASTER...

HAVE I BEEN FIGHTING *MYSELF* THIS WHOLE TIME!?

THE

WHAT IS THE WAY OF THE SWORD?

KRRCH

Vagabond

"THE WAY OF THE SWORD"...?

I...

KRICH

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

#68 No Sword

PLEASE INSTRUCT US...!

BACK THEN, I LIVED IN A WORLD OF CHAOS AND FURY.

SHUF

SHUF

MY "SELF."

THAT'S WHAT YAGYŪ MUNEYOSHI'S SWORDSMANSHIP WAS ALL ABOUT.

"I SHALL DEFEAT *MY* OPPONENT."

"...WITH *MY* POWER..."

"LOOK AT *ME*..."

"...WITH *MY* STRENGTH..."

"...WITH *MY* EXISTENCE..."

...

HE ASKED OF US...

"WHY WOULD YOU DEDICATE YOUR LIVES TO *THAT*?"

THE MASTER...

LOOK AT *ME*...

...THAT THE WAY OF THE SWORD IS SO TRIVIAL?

DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE...

...IS ONE WITH HEAVEN AND EARTH.

MY SWORD...

WITH *MY* WAY, THE SWORD NEED NOT EVEN BE PRESENT...

NO SWORD...

ما كان

!!
ما كان

MUSASHI HAS THE UPPER HAND...

INSHUN...

HE'S RETREATING!

!?

SHUF

SHUF

TUNK

!!

KRICH

SHIT

FUCK!

SWOP

FWUP

THMP
THMP

HUF

HUF

THMP
THMP

THMP
THMP

HUF

THMP
THMP

HUF

WHEN I FIRST MET MUSASHI...

...HERE IN THE MOUNTAINS ...?

DOES INSHUN HAVE A DIS-ADVANTAGE ...

THE MOUNTAINS --

HUF

HUF

HUF

...HE SAID THE MOUNTAINS WERE HIS ONLY MASTER.

HE DOES NOT FEAR INSHUN'S SPEAR...

HE'S NOT AFRAID...

HE TOSSED ASIDE HIS BAMBOO SWORD AND STOOD BEFORE ME...

THE MASTER...

NO SWORD...

HIS PRESENCE WAS SUBLIME...

...AS IF HIS ENTIRE BODY WERE MELTING OUT INTO THE SKY.

I CRIED OUT FOR ALL I WAS WORTH.

HUF

HUF

HUF

BUT, I REALLY WANTED TO JUST THROW DOWN MY SPEAR AND RUN AWAY.

THMP THMP

THMP THMP

IT WAS ALL I COULD DO.

I RUSHED AT HIM SCREAMING AT THE TOP OF MY LUNGS.

HUF

HUF

HUF

THMP THMP

INSHUN...

THMP THMP

HUF

HUF

HUF

THMP THMP

AYAHHH!!

About the Author

VAGABOND was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best selling manga *SLAM DUNK*, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. For his work on *VAGABOND*, Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga. Most recently in 2002, Inoue's *VAGABOND* received the prestigious Tezuka award for best manga. To date, *VAGABOND* has sold well over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, *ONE ON ONE*.

About *VAGABOND* and *Miyamoto Musashi*

Takehiko Inoue's *VAGABOND*, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *MUSASHI*, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide *A BOOK OF FIVE RINGS*, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords at once, holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"—he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films, *THE SAMURAI TRILOGY*, directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune were also based on Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*. Perhaps inspired by the huge success of *VAGABOND* in Japan, in 2003, NHK produced the historical period drama, *MUSASHI*. Also based on Yoshikawa's novel, this drama stars kabuki actor Shinnosuke Ichikawa as Musashi and TV star Ryoko Yonekura as Otsu.

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

Hozoin Spear Technique
Created by the Buddhist monk Kakuzenbo Hoin In'ei (1521-1607) of Hozoin Temple which was a sub-temple of Kofukuji Temple in Nara. This spear technique is typified by quick dexterous movements rather than the use of brute force.

Kami'izumi Ise no Kami Hidetsuna (1508-1577(?))
The son of Kami'izumi Ise no Kami Hidetsugu, the lord of Kami'izumi Castle in present-day Gunma Prefecture. Hidetsuna founded the Shinkage-ryu Style of sword fighting and was such an accomplished swordsman and military strategist that he was once recruited by the famed Takeda Shingen. Hidetsuna, however, declined the post, stating that he preferred to travel throughout the land so that he might perfect his swordsmanship. Many notable figures studied under Hidetsuna including the esteemed Yagyu Munenori and Hozoin In'ei.

The Sengoku Period and the Battle of Sekigahara
The Warring States or *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weaker and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo* (domainal lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the *daimyo* were constantly at war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of all of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating an orderly federation amongst the *daimyo*, and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) in Mino (located in present day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of the leading temple of the Rinzai sect, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled *THE UNFETTERED MIND* has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key general's in the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*—responsible for the surveillance of the *daimyo*. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's *LONE WOLF AND CUB* as the plotters of the downfall of Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evil-doers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's *VAGABOND* as well as in Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*, Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.

This is the LAST page of this comic!

VAGABOND has been printed to read from **right** to **left** in its original Japanese format—presenting Takehiko Inoue's dynamic artwork the way it was meant to be seen!

When most Japanese comics are published in English, a mirror image of the original artwork is printed in order to accommodate the left to right reading orientation of English. For this reason, errors in continuity occasionally occur and characters who were originally right-handed suddenly become left-handed. In order to present manga in its purest form, *VAGABOND* is being printed to read from right to left. This way, kimono are worn with the left side over the right and the samurai's long and short swords are carried on the **left** side, the way they were traditionally worn.

To properly enjoy *VAGABOND*, start from the other end of this comic and read from right to left.

A note on names: The names presented within the context of this comic are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname, followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of *VAGABOND*, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.

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